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STALIN

INTRODUCTION

*A biographical sketch of the man who leads
the U. S. S. R.*

by

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INTRODUCTION

To-day, more than ever previously, has it come to be realised how much the future welfare of the world depends upon the continued counsel and action of Joseph Stalin, whom so many millions love and admire, in whose capacity so many millions have confidence, and whom in the past slander has so bitterly reviled.

Stalin cannot be known without a study of his work. As most important and interesting sources of his speeches and writings should be mentioned: "Marxism and the National and Colonial Question" (Lawrence & Wishart); "Leninism" (Allen & Unwin and Lawrence & Wishart), including—but obtainable separately—"The Foundations of Leninism" (Lawrence & Wishart) and "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" "Stalin Speaks," the collection of his three speeches on the present war (People's Publishing House.)

Many biographies have been written about him. Those by enemies are in large part fantasies that subsequent events have so effectually disproved as to discredit utterly their authors. Of the more authoritative, the most popularly written and readable are "Stalin," by Henri Barbusse (The Bodley Head) and "Landmarks in the Life of Stalin," by E. Yaroslavsky.

Yet these are both quite long, and there may therefore be usefulness in this short pamphlet setting down the bare outlines of his life and of his work.

STALIN

"Djugashvili, Joseph Vissarionovitch... stoutish... deep voice... small birthmark on left ear... shape of head normal... gives impression of an ordinary man." (Police Inspector's Report on Stalin in 1905).

"Oh, Stalin is a great man. I could feel the pulsating power of the man. The Russians are led well and wisely. I put my faith in that man's leadership." (Beaverbrook on Stalin, November 8th, 1941).

"I am only a disciple of Lenin and it is my whole ambition to be a faithful disciple." (Stalin).

JOSEPH STALIN (Yosif Vissarionovitch Stalin, b. Djugashvili) was 62 years old on December 21st, 1941. During these 62 years life has changed not only for him, but has been changed, largely by him, for 200 million people. A conglomeration of peoples, largely at one another's throats, barbarous, backward, has become a united family solid enough and powerful enough to constitute the main bulwark standing between the whole of civilisation and its destruction, a rampart that is yet standing where many proud and ancient nations have been washed away. What manner of man is he?

Stalin was born in 1879 in Gori, a Georgian town that was little more than a village. His birthplace was a small house with brick foundations, wooden walls and a plank ceiling. It stood on the outskirts, in a cobble lane with a stream running through it. "The room in which the family lived was about five square yards and adjoined the kitchen. There was not even a doorstep. The whole furniture consisted of a small table, a stool and a large sofa, something in the nature of a built-in bunk covered with a straw pallet," a schoolmate tells us.

Stalin's father Vissarion, was a shoemaker who worked at times at home as a cobbler, was employed at times in the neighbouring factory. His mother Yekaterina (Catherine) had to go out to work as a washerwoman to make ends meet. She lived, until some few years ago, in the Georgian capital Tbilisi (former Tiflis), where foreigners have described the old lady as dignified and wearing a heavy old-fashioned black head-dress and veil.

At the age of seven Stalin started to learn to read both Georgian and Russian. Despite their poverty, his parents managed to enable him to attend Gori ecclesiastical school. Here, like Lenin as a boy, he was a diligent

pupil with regular top marks, and he finished with a certificate of merit. In 1894 he entered the theological seminary at Tiflis.

Even at ecclesiastical school, Stalin had made acquaintance with "subversive" ideas, Darwin and Marx. In the seminary he encountered a system of regulation maintained by spying that lighted the spark of revolt. "In protest against the humiliating regime and the Jesuitical methods that prevailed I was ready to become, and eventually did become, a revolutionary," said Stalin in after-life.

At the age of 15 he became connected with various under-ground Marxist groups in Transcaucasia. He joined a circulating library, though this was forbidden in the seminary, and read voraciously in history and world literature, including Shakespeare. The only copy of "Capital" available was one transcribed by hand paid for by pennies collected by the students.

At this time Stalin wrote poetry, published in several of the capital's literary magazines. He would lead choral singing. A delicate boy, slim, with oval face and large dark eyes, thick jet black hair, Stalin was already making an impression on his fellow-students that may be gauged from phrases in their recollections: 'brevity' 'clearness,' 'accuracy,' 'strength of character,' 'breadth of knowledge.' In 1896 he formed a Marxist study circle in the seminary to read works on economics, philosophy and science.

In 1898 the students produced their first duplicated magazine. This same year Stalin made his first acquaintance with an article by Lenin, then far off in St. Petersburg. Thus at a far distance and unknown to one of them was born the collaboration that was to transform one-sixth of the world. Thenceforward the younger man, still a boy, was to sustain and advance the ideas of the older, at first among the circles of Marxists in Transcaucasia, later before the working-class movement of all countries.

In 1899 Stalin, who had already experienced punishment for such crimes as subscribing to a circulating library and reading Victor Hugo, was expelled from the seminary as "politically unreliable" and became henceforth a professional revolutionary.

In Transcaucasia at this time rapid changes were taking place. In the thirty years prior to 1895 the urban population had increased threefold. Side by side with large enterprises, such as those concerned in the oil exploitation at Baku, which were financed mainly by capital from abroad and where the appalling conditions included a 14-hour day, there still existed feudal, even patriarchal primitive conditions in the countryside.

All sorts of political currents were prevalent: romantic feudal nationalism; bourgeois progressive movements of "liberal" type; and, founded in the nineties, a Marxist movement. Stalin, joining this, immediately developed differences with its prevailing leadership. Influenced by the contemporary "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class" of Lenin

in St. Petersburg, Stalin urged the need for a newspaper and mass agitation, even if these were forbidden by the police.

In 1898 railway and other strikes were organised in Tiflis with Stalin's participation. In 1899 he led the first celebrations of May Day in Transcaucasia. In 1900 the May Day celebrations were attended by 500 persons. In 1901 a demonstration of 2,000 was attacked by the police. Stalin, who for a time had earned his living with a comrade as observer at the local geophysical observatory, was compelled to go into hiding. Later the same year he was elected a member of the committee at the first conference of the "Tiflis Social-Democratic Organisation." The committee decided to send Stalin to Batum, where there were big enterprises owned by Rothschild and Mantashev. Police surveillance was so strict that "old hands" among the Social Democrats believed it impossible to organise a working-class movement. But by 1902 the majority of the factory workers were organised, and strikes against the unendurable conditions followed. A huge demonstration was fired on by the police. Stalin, who was maintaining an illegal press in his bedroom, was arrested and in 1903 exiled to Irkutsk in Siberia. In 1904 he was back in Batum.

Thus began the tale of Stalin's arrests and escapes. They make an extraordinary catalogue:

(1) 1902. Arrested in Batum in April, imprisoned there and at Kutais, exiled in November, 1903 to Irkutsk, Eastern Siberia, for three years; escaped January, 1904.

(2) 1908. Arrested in Baku in March, imprisoned in Baidov prison; exiled to Solvychegodsk in Vologda province for two years in September; escaped June, 1909.

(3) 1910. Arrested in Baku in March; September, exiled to Solvychegodsk again; escaped July, 1911.

(4) 1911. Arrested in St. Petersburg in September; December, exiled once more to Solvychegodsk; escaped February, 1912.

(5) 1912. Arrested in St. Petersburg in April; exiled in early summer to Naryn Territory, Western Siberia, in the north, for four years; escaped in middle summer of the same year.

(6) 1913. Arrested in St. Petersburg in April, exiled to Turukhan Territory at Kuleika, 70 miles from the Arctic Circle, in June. Transferred to Krasnoyarsk and then Achinsk 1916. Returned February, 1917.

Thus Stalin was arrested and exiled six times, and escaped five times. Of 16 years as an underground revolutionary between 1901 and 1917, he spent just over nine years in prison and exile. But what years of intense packed activity these were, not only while at large but also in confinement! The young "Djugashvili," now a striking figure growing strong, a short black beard around his cheeks and chin, his hair still thick and black, his

eyes flashing, had scores of aliases—Soeo (a pet name, diminutive of his first name), Koba, David and many others besides Stalin, by which the world knows him to-day. In the intervals between arrests he worked in Batum, in Tiflis, in the mountains, most important of all, in Baku among the oil-workers.

His work included factory organisation, organisation of underground work, printing presses, forged passports, and organisations of workers' self-defence squads against the violence with which the Tsarist police encountered the most peaceful type of demonstration. Years that included the first revolution of 1905; combating the "legal" police-organised trade unions by organisation of independent unions; and struggle, both by open debate and by floods of leaflets and periodicals, for the leadership of the growing labour movement against nationalists, anarchists, and the Menshevik "compromisers" who disagreed with the policy Lenin advocated for development of the Marxist Party.

Police violence did not cease outside the doors of the cells; several of Stalin's colleagues were assassinated after arrest, others crippled by beating. Stalin himself was once obliged to "walk the gauntlet," which he did inflexibly, without hastening his pace, between two lines of soldiers commanded to beat the "politicals."

Yet, in confinement, neither contact with the revolutionary movement outside nor surreptitious study circles inside ever ceased. It was while Stalin was in exile in Irkutsk in 1903 that he first exchanged letters with Lenin. It was a life that killed, or hardened. Exposed to a blizzard once during exile, he fell unconscious and lay so for sixteen hours after dragging himself back to his hut; but when he came to, the intense cold had dismissed a tendency to tuberculosis, which never returned.

And in all this, he managed often besides to get abroad. In 1905 as a delegate to the Fourth Bolshevik Conference at Tammerfors in Finland. In 1906 as a delegate to the Fourth Congress in Stockholm. In 1907 a visit to Berlin, and a journey to the Fifth Congress in London. In 1912 Central Europe again, twice to confer with Lenin in Cracow.

It was at Tammerfors that Stalin first met Lenin, "the mountain eagle of our Party," as he described him. He has left a record of that first meeting and the impression that it made on him. Lenin speedily recognised the quality of Stalin. "A wonderful Georgian," is how he speaks of him in a letter to Maxim Gorky. Thenceforward in all the conflicts of policy that divided the revolutionaries, and through which Lenin's penetrating foresight held the course straight, Stalin invariably was pursuing the same course.

It was not a case of automatic support, but of real discipleship. For example, Kautsky's pamphlet on the 1905 Russian Revolution was published nearly simultaneously in Russia by Lenin and Stalin independently and un-

known to each other. Each wrote prefaces for it. A comparison of the two prefaces shows the complete identity of ideas.

"Leninism" is the Marxist analysis of life and the application of that analysis, based upon the addition of the experience of the years since Marx lived and wrote, and in which Lenin led the Russian people to victory over Tsarism. The most notable contribution of Stalin to theory in this youthful period was his working out of a Marxist-Leninist solution of the National Question, first published in 1913.

Stalin was particularly fitted for this, for his homeland—Transcaucasia—was a cockpit of national struggle; Georgians, Azerbaidjanians, Armenians, Jews, Turks, Dagestanians, Ossetians, Mingrelians, Persians, and scores of others, all literally at daggers drawn and all alike beneath the jackboot of the Great Russian bureaucracy of the Tsar. It was his articles on this subject that called forth Lenin's admiration.

In after-life, the theory became a practice, for immediately following the Revolution, Stalin was appointed Commissar of Nationalities and was able to apply and test his solution in action. The triumphant result of this test is the amazing flowering of national life and tradition among every one of the more than a hundred different peoples of the U. S. S. R., combined with such a solidarity and mutual loyalty as no multi-national state has ever given example of before; together with the clause in the Soviet (Stalin) Constitution which absolutely forbids advocacy or practice of any racial privilege or prejudice within the borders of the U. S. S. R.—a rule which no other state, despite nearly two thousand years of preaching of brotherhood through Christianity, and the foundation of many states paying lip-service to that principle, has ever ventured to proclaim.

After 1910 Stalin did not return to Baku. He worked in St. Petersburg, guiding on behalf of the Party the electoral campaigns and the work of the Bolshevik deputies in the Duma (the Parliament, with only advisory status, conceded by the Tsar after the 1905 revolt). Stalin missed the Prague Bolshevik Conference in 1912. Although he had prepared for it, his arrest in 1911 prevented his attendance. None the less, despite his absence, he was elected a member of the Central Committee and placed at the head of the "Russian Bureau," the body composed of those leading comrades who were remaining in, and working in Russia.

Inspired by this mark of confidence, he immediately escaped, and organized the publication of the Bolshevik paper *Pravda*. On the day of the first issue he was arrested again, but got out once more in a few months, to continue guiding the paper and the Duma deputies. But once more, in 1913, he was arrested, this time while visiting a concert hall at which the crowd was to be used as a covering opportunity for unobserved meeting

by several of the underground workers. Stalin had been given away by one of the deputies who, unknown to his colleagues, was a police agent.

This time at last, beside the Arctic Circle, the Tsar's provincial governors managed to hold Stalin. Here in exile he spent the next four years: reading, writing, discussing with fellow-prisoners, engaging in correspondence smuggled to and from friends and comrades outside, and, principally, hunting and fishing, harpooning the fish with home-made harpoons through holes in the ice cut by home-made axes. Here Stalin passed the first years of the War of 1914. Letters that he wrote, and still in existence, show that, though so far from Lenin, his views were none the less identical on the problems that were raised by the war and on what was to be done.

Came February, 1917, and the collapse of Tsarism. The gates of prison and exile were opened. Within a fortnight Stalin was back in Petrograd, as St. Petersburg was now called, once more directing *Pravda* and through it guiding the Bolsheviks, who were now able to emerge from underground.

In April Lenin returned from abroad. Stalin met him near his point of landing, travelled to Petrograd with him, supported his theses at the subsequent May Congress of the Bolsheviks and thereafter worked so closely with him that the leading articles of Lenin and Stalin alternated with each other in *Pravda* during this period. This was the first time Stalin had actually worked physically by the side of Lenin and he has since testified to the enormous enlightenment it was for him, his "revolutionary baptism of fire."

In July the Provisional Government clamped down on the Bolsheviks once more. Lenin had to go into hiding in the Finnish marshes. Stalin remained at the head of *Pravda* and acted as Lenin's contact, through whom Lenin still guided the Party's policy. In the autumn the Bolsheviks began to prepare for insurrection.

The Party appointed Stalin one of the Committee of five to guide the political preparation of the revolution, one of the Committee of seven to prepare its organisation. On October 10th the Party Central Committee appointed Stalin the member of the Political Bureau in charge of the uprising; on October 16th the head of the Party Centre for its direction.

On the night of October 24th (November 6th—modern style calendar) Lenin emerged from hiding and together with Stalin guided the transference of power that took place next day. The decision of the Congress of Soviets (dated October 27th) to form a Government was signed by Lenin as Chairman of the Council and Stalin as Chairman for the Affairs of the Nationalities.

"Since 1917, not a single year of his career has passed without his having done something that would have made another man famous," wrote Barbusse of Stalin. At the outset of the Revolution it fell to Stalin to

become Commissar for Nationalities, and to apply the policy he had himself devised whereby the Bolsheviks of a "ruling" nation (Russia) must insist on complete freedom, even to the point of secession, for the minor nationalities; while the Bolsheviks of the "backward" nationalities should find in this freedom the environment making it possible now to work for close co-operation by their own previously oppressed nationality with even the previously dominating one.

In this capacity it was Stalin who went immediately to Helsinki to announce to the Finnish people their right to the independent existence which former Russian governments had always denied to them. No one else, Lenin said, could have been found so trusted by the different nationalities.

In the critical period of the peace negotiations of Brest Litovsk, when at first scarcely any other of his colleagues supported Lenin's far-sighted realisation of the need to make an unfavourable peace in order to gain a breathing space and build up the country, only Stalin saw clearly and supported Lenin's view, epitomised in the words: "Either a respite or downfall."

In 1918 it was Stalin who was sent to restore the railway line to the North Caucasus and obtain the grain for which the cities hungered. From here Stalin wrote to Lenin: "Rest assured, Comrade Lenin, that no one is being spared, *neither myself nor anyone else*—and that whatever happens we will send you wheat." (*Our italics*). Later in 1919, Stalin added the duties of Commissar of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, carrying the responsibility of checking all intrigue, incompetence, corruption or sabotage, a job of which Lenin said: "The work is gigantic, only a man of authority could discharge this task, could avoid our being swamped by petty intrigue."

But it is in his work with the Red Army, in his role in the Civil War, that the greatness of Stalin in the period of revolution can be seen most clearly. "Between 1918 and 1920, Stalin was the only man whom the Central Committee kept sending from one front to another, to the point at which the Revolution was in the greatest peril," wrote Kalinin.

In the course of those two years, Stalin led the defence of Tsaritsyn with Voroshilov, that of Perm with Dzerzhinsky, the repulse of Yudenitch at Petrograd, repulse of the Polish White invaders at Smolensk, the driving of Denikin to the south, the extrication of the First Cavalry Army at Zhitomir during the Polish hostilities, the crushing of Wrangel in the south.

Of Tsaritsyn, Kaganovitch, since one of Stalin's closest colleagues and Russia's greatest peacetime organisers, wrote: "Those were indeed terrible days. You should have seen Stalin at that time. Calm and as always wrapped in his thoughts, literally never sleeping at all, he divided his tireless labours between the firing line and Army Headquarters. The situation at the front was almost desperate...There was no way out for us. But Stalin did not trouble about this. He had one idea only: they must win,

This indomitable will of Stalin's transmitted itself to his immediate associates and, in spite of being in a situation from which there was practically no escape, no one for a moment had any doubts about victory.

"And we triumphed."

At Perm, Stalin found the 3rd Corps demoralised, drunken and drifting away. He restored the front and organised it to take the offensive. On the shores of the Baltic, Yudenitch was within a few miles of Petrograd. Within 20 days the Red Forces, under Stalin's leadership had him in headlong flight. The "amateur strategist" wrote to Lenin: "Naval specialists assure me that the capture of Krasnya Gorka has upset the whole theory of naval science. I feel it my duty to assure you that in future I shall continue to act thus, in spite of my respect for science."

Denikin threatened Moscow. Never before had the White danger been so close. Stalin was assigned to take charge by the Central Committee. He made it a condition that "Trotsky was not to meddle." He changed the plan and, instead of driving through the hostile Don Cossack country, as Trotsky's military experts had desired, chose the line of the Donetz basin, where miners and factory workers would at every step hamper the enemy's communications and welcome the advancing Red Force. By this single yet decisive choice, the conditions were provided whereby Denikin was pushed back and utterly shattered.

"At a moment of grave danger when, surrounded on all sides by a solid ring of enemies . . . J. V. Stalin, appointed by the Presidium to a fighting post, succeeded by his energy and tireless work in rallying the Red Army troops who had wavered. Himself present in the front line and under fire, Stalin by his personal example inspired the ranks of those fighting for the Socialist Revolution." Thus reads the first award to Stalin of the Order of the Red Banner. He won two Red Banners. And sat as a representative of the War Council from 1920 to 1923.

Venomous opponents of Stalin and of Socialism used to attempt to belittle this remarkable record, to minimise Stalin's role on the military side of the Civil War. How much has the lie been given to these slanderers by the courage, endurance, decision and strategic skill with which he has guided and inspired the colossal military operations of the present day "That great warrior, Stalin," as Mr. Churchill called him on November 8th, 1941, amply demonstrated in those past days the qualities that are amazing everyone now.

In 1921 during a short illness of Stalin, and on from 1922 when Lenin was seriously ill, the intimacy of the two great leaders grew still closer. In 1922 Stalin became appointed General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, a new post that marked the dependence that from now on began to be placed on in his valuable work, the confidence in his ability. In December of that year the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics was formed, Stalin

as Commissar for Nationalities playing the prime part in the drafting of the constitution.

In 1924 Lenin died. At the memorial meeting of the Second Soviet Congress, Stalin took a solemn vow: to hold high and guard the purity of the title of member of the Party; to guard the unity of the Party; to guard and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat; to strengthen the alliance of the workers and peasants, to consolidate the Union of the Republics; to strengthen the Red Army and Navy, to remain true to the principles of the Communist International.

That same year, in a series of lectures entitled "The Foundations of Leninism," Stalin set out for the growing youth of the U. S. S. R. a definition of the principles of Lenin's teachings. Yet almost at once, there began to become apparent basic conflicts with several prominent personalities, many of whom possessed a vacillating history, or—like Trotsky—a record of only brief membership of the Party, and who grouped themselves into an obstructive Opposition.

Though the Opposition fluctuated in emphasis between "Right" and "Left," basically its motivation was one—lack of confidence in the Revolution, in the capacity of the people, in the potentialities of the working class. Whereas Stalin held, as had Lenin, that it was possible to build Socialism in the Soviet Union—and that while it was true that only Socialism throughout the world could make Socialism in one country finally secure, the job here and now was to set about building Socialism in the sector where the workers had power—the Opposition held in common that the continued existence of Capitalism abroad meant that Socialism in the U. S. S. R. was doomed to failure or to destruction. The "Lefts" drew the lesson that, since the only hope was to speed up the overthrow of Capitalism abroad, all efforts directed towards Socialist construction at home should be abandoned as wasteful. The "Right," holding the overthrow of Capitalism abroad also to be impossible, drew the lesson that the only course was to surrender and compromise with it.

The leading "Lefts" in general were Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, the leading "Rights," Rykov, Bukharin and Trotsky, but their common foundation in wavering and lack of confidence led them to fluctuate into associations that blurred the distinction between them on one issue or another at different times.

The opposition did not begin after Lenin's death. It had shown itself always with the same basis, in countless issues of the past. For example, Trotsky himself had only become an actual member of the Bolshevik Party in 1917; formerly he had spent as much ingenuity and skill denouncing all Lenin's ideas and policies as impractical and abominable, as later he spent in abusing the policies advocated by Stalin and adopted by the Party. It was Kamenev and Zinoviev who had felt the October Revolution doomed to failure

and revealed the plans in advance to the Provisional Government. It was all of them, Lefts and Rights, all save Lenin and Stalin, who had lacked confidence in the power of the Soviet people to recover from an adverse peace and had made disaster worse by opposing Brest-Litovsk.

Again, as was subsequently revealed, they had been so convinced of disaster soon after that they had even been implicated in plots with enemies to seize the person of Lenin, and if necessary to "dispose" of him, so as to adopt their own "compromise" course. In 1920 they had opposed electrification as a "dream"; Trotsky had so lacked confidence in the workers that he had wanted to dragoon the trade unions and place them under military discipline, etc.

It was the historic task of Stalin to steer his way and to steer the country between these ruinous tendencies on each side. Kirov, who was later assassinated by the Opposition said in 1933:

"It is not easy to grasp the figure of Stalin in all its gigantic proportions. In these latter years, ever since we have had to carry on our work without Lenin, there has been no major development in our labours, no innovation, slogan or trend of policy of any importance of which Comrade Stalin was not the author. All the major work—and this the Party should know—is guided by the instructions, the initiative and the leadership of Comrade Stalin. The decision of all important problems of international policy is guided by his recommendations. And not only important problems interest him, what might seem third-rate, even tenth-rate problems interest him if they affect the workers, the peasants, the labouring people generally of our country."

Now, in 1925, the basic task was to convert the country from an agricultural to an industrial country. Supporting Lenin's view that Socialism could be built in the Soviet territories, Stalin pointed out that it was impossible to construct successfully without this perspective: "without clear prospects in our constructive work, without the certainty of building Socialism, the worker masses cannot consciously take part in this work of construction."

...Without the certainty of building Socialism there can be no will to build Socialism. Who wants to build when he knows that the job will not be finished?"

This was not a desertion of the workers' movement in other countries, but the very reverse; it would be an example to them and fill them with confidence. "Building Socialism in the U. S. S. R. will further the common cause of the proletarians of all countries, it will hammer out the victory over capital not only in the U. S. S. R. but in the Capitalist countries as well." (Speeches to the 14th Party Congress.) Stalin thus put the case for industrialization: "We are working and building in the midst of a

Capitalist encirclement....The conclusion to be drawn is that we must build our economic system in such a way as to prevent our country becoming an appendage of the world Capitalist system in such a way that the economic system should not develop as an auxiliary enterprise of world Capitalism, but as an independent economic unit, one relying mainly on the home market, in the bond between industry and peasant farming in our country." (Speeches to the 14th Party Congress)

The Opposition, which held this to be impossible, drew the opposite deduction, that if the U. S. S. R. could not become industrial, it must remain agrarian, dependent for industrial products on the economy of Capitalist countries outside and on loans received to purchase them, a sort of colonial dependence and obviously progressive return of subordination to Capitalist influences.

Stalin's proposals and "general line" were overwhelmingly endorsed by the Party Conference and Congresses. They meant a terrific tightening of belts, to finance the country from its own efforts so to speak, accumulating the capital necessary for constructions from economics and saving on home production; they meant reducing consumption in the present to invest in industrial machinery that would lead to greater production and improved consumption in the future. But none the less, this was willingly and deliberately faced and endorsed for the sake of the security and independence that it would bring.

The industrial plans succeeded. After the devastation of the Civil War, Lenin had replaced its temporary "War Communism" with the "New Economic Policy," a system whereby every constructive element in the country was used, controlled Capitalist enterprises being allowed to resume on a small scale as well as State enterprises organised, to get as much going as possible without waiting for complete State organisation at a time when not only the State was weak but trained people were few. Between 1925 and 1929 industry was not only got going again but had so developed, and State enterprises had so replaced the temporary individual enterprises, that by the latter date coordination had gone far enough for a single plan to be devised for the whole economy—the famous Five Year Plan.

This, looked on as a fantasy abroad, was none the less accomplished in the main in four years, and with it a degree of industrialisation that successfully transformed the country at one stroke from dependence to independence. It could be followed by a second plan which, while providing for industrial development still more, could safely side by side with this turn attention to developing consumption and the standard of living.

Besides industrialisation one further absolute condition was required for this advance. The backward countryside, split into a myriad tiny holdings incapable of utilising modern mechanised agriculture, must be transformed. The backward and "dark" peasantry, divided into three classes

—the poor peasants, with holdings too small to nourish them, obliged therefore to hire out their labour; the middle peasants; and the rich peasants, or *kulaks*, with property so large that they could cultivate it only by use of the labour driven to them by poverty, these latter therefore depending on the continuation of a rural poor—must be changed to a single class working together and no longer divided into sections of exploited and exploiters. The basis of achievement of both these objects was “collectivisation,” laying the foundation for use of large-scale modern farming machinery and changing the age-long individual cultivator to a Socialist farmer.

This was Stalin's plan put forward to the 15th Party Congress in 1927, opposed once again by all the variegated oppositions. Something must be done. Farm production was up almost to the figure for pre-war (and pre-civil-war-destruction) output, but only 35% of it was being marketed. The Lefts and Rights reacted in their typical ways. “Dragoon the peasants,” cried the Lefts, advocating that the poor peasants be united against the middle and rich peasants. The Rights urged that, since the rich peasants were prosperous, the way to make farming as a whole prosperous was to help them to become still richer, thus proposing to make all agriculture—and thus the food basis of the Soviet Union—dependent on the enrichment of individual wealthy peasants, and opening a back door for the return of Capitalism.

The Stalin policy was to unite all who could benefit from farming collectively into collective farms on the basis of the benefits they would get out of them. It based itself therefore on the vast majority—poor peasants and middle peasants—and also needed patience, since the policy could succeed only at the rate at which industry could supply machines and products which would give advantage to collectivisers. Thus the scheme lagged till 1929, when at last industry began to reach a level high enough for the purpose. From then on till 1933 followed a struggle in many ways not less bitter or less fierce than the original revolutionary battles of ten or more years back.

The *kulaks*, or rich peasants, were bound to be opposed to collectivisation. In the disappearance of the poor peasant, in his assembly into self-supporting collective agriculture, they could see in each village the disappearance of subject labour the aid of which they required to exploit their own large and wealthy farms. Hence they sabotaged, waylaid and shot collective farmers; burnt collective farm property, destroyed stock; left fields uncultivated. And hence, since much of agricultural production had derived from them, a period of scarcity, hunger, struggle, unknown since the Civil War.

Yet by 1933 all had succeeded. The *kulak* had disappeared and with him, in Stalin's words, were shattered “the last hopes of the Capitalists of all countries who were dreaming of restoring capital in the U. S. S. R. The peasants whom they regarded as material for manuring the soil for Capitalism, are abandoning en masse the landed banner of ‘private property’ and are

taking the path of collectivism, the path of Socialism; the last hope for the restoration of Capitalism is crumbling."

By 1933 the main economy had been changed from agrarian to industrial, the collective farms had begun to become prosperous, unemployment had disappeared, Socialist production was dominant and Capitalist production eliminated, the exploitation of man by man (individual employment of one man by another to the latter's profit) had ended.

Not only was the way open at last to a progressive and rapid rise in living standards—"Life shall be joyous," as Stalin's slogan put it; but also, as Stalin recalled: "As a result of all this, the Soviet Union has been converted from a weak country, unprepared for defence, into a country mighty in defence, a country capable of producing on a mass scale all modern weapons of defence and of equipping its Army with them in the event of an attack from without."

A result which history has proved was to be not without its usefulness for all humanity, for others besides the Soviet people, before very long.

If the preceding decade had seen an a most magical transformation in the material background of the Soviet peoples, the foundations thus laid, the gates thus opened, were to result in an equally magical transformation in the way of life and thus in the human constituents the people of the Soviet Union themselves.

In all this Stalin was the sensitive, the guiding influence. The one change had had to come before the other. In 1931 Stalin had pointed out that the U. S. S. R. was as much as "50 or 100 years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in 10 years. Either we do it, or they crush us." (Has ever statesman made a more exact prediction?) And by what means could it be done?

Up to then Bolsheviks had done the political leading. But they had rested dependent on others for technical advice—the remnants of the old experts, foreign technicians from abroad etc. Now Bolshevik must master technique. It was time Bolsheviks themselves became experts. In the period of reconstruction technique decides everything. "It could be done. There are no fortresses which Bolsheviks cannot capture. We have solved a number of most difficult problems....What remains to be done is not so much: to study technique, to master science. And when we have done this we will develop a tempo of which we dare not even dream at present. And we can do this if we really want to."

It was done, and by 1935 the technique and the tempo were there. Things were not only getting better, they were getting better fantastically fast. The only brake was the development of people to make use of the unlimited expansible means. As Stalin said, some systems did it the other way, and liked to laugh at the Soviet Union. They had skilled people and

wasted them. The U. S. S. R. had built up the machinery and the opportunity first, and, of course, inexperienced people had broken a lot and bungled a lot and given "philistines" room to laugh. But people would develop. There is no limit to the development of people.

In 1935, looking around, Stalin could say that material development had been good: "That is very good. But it is not enough, not enough by far. In order to set technique going and use it to the full, we need people who have mastered technique.

...It is time to realise that of all the valuable capital the world possesses, the most valuable and decisive is people. It must be realised 'cadres decide everything.' If we have good and numerous cadres in industry, agriculture, transport and the Army—our country will be invincible. If we do not have such cadres—we shall be lame on both legs. '

Many books contain figures showing the wonderful material changes brought about under Stalin's leadership in the U. S. S. R. Many books tell you of the heights of culture, art and invention. But if you want to realise how Stalin's guidance achieved its object and "changed" a whole people, by releasing and giving the opportunity for realisation of the latent abilities that lie in Everyman, remember the primitive, backward, illiterate, superstitious *muzik*, the bearded Russian peasant with his gloom and misery that our fathers knew, and then go to see such a picture as "One Day in Russia." If you think that is "propaganda," recall Lord Beaverbrook's broadcast:

"Captain Balfour, Colonel Lyon, of the American Air Force, and Sir Archibald Rowlands, of the Aircraft Ministry... visited the factories where aircraft are produced. All three tell me they place the aircraft and engine factories for efficiency and capacity on the level of performance which we have reached in this country, and in the United States....

"Colonel Lyon tells of the decision to construct an airfield for the reception of the British and American aircraft we have been sending to Russia. A forest was cleared. A swamp was drained. A road was driven. Two long and wide runways were built. Yet that airfield was completed within thirty days.

"Now, you may ask, can the Russians use to the best advantage the weapons made for them at home and abroad, in Britain and in the United States? Yes....

"Indeed, the Russians have a genius for mechanisation. They can be relied upon to make full use of the opportunities our forges and factories provide for them. '

Remember—twenty short years ago, the bearded *muzik*; five years ago—Stalin's call "cadres decide everything", and to-day, the experts of the most advanced industrial countries of the world speak of "the Russians with their genius for mechanisation."

It was in 1935 that the Stakhanov Movement was born and fostered by Stalin, that movement from below by the worker himself to make his labour easier and more productive in new, ingenious ways, so that on his last visit even so cautious an observer as Sir Walter Citrine felt bound to remark, respecting the enormous output increases, that they were achieved rather by ingenuity than by intense toil.

It was in 1935 also that the new constitution, the Stalin Constitution, was introduced. This was a landmark in man's history, for it established for the first time as *law* for a human community practices that had throughout all systems of the past been no more than distant hopes and aspirations—the right to work, the right to leisure, the right to education; these rights for everyone, for both sexes equally, for all without distinction of race or nationality or colour or creed.

Stalin felt that this had significance not for Soviet citizens alone, but for the whole world. For the Soviet peoples he called it "a summary of their struggles, a summary of their victories in the struggle for the emancipation of mankind", for the peoples of Capitalist countries it could not but have "the significance of a programme of action," the proof of what *could* be achieved.

Stalin has always felt this meaning of Soviet success. "The working class of the U. S. S. R.," he said in 1931, "is part of the world working class. We achieved victory not only as a result of the efforts of the working class of the U. S. S. R. but also thanks to the support of the working class of the world. Without this support we would have been torn to pieces long ago. It is said that our country is the shock brigade of the proletariat of all countries. This is well said. But this imposes very serious obligations upon us. Why does the international proletariat support us? How did we merit this support?... By the fact that we are doing that which, if successful, will change the whole world and free the entire working class. But what is needed for success? We must march forward in such a way that the working class of the whole world, looking at us, may say: 'This is my vanguard, this is my shock-brigade, this is my working-class state, this is my fatherland; they are promoting their cause, which is our cause, and they are doing this well; let us support them!'"

By 1939 already he could declare: "If the successes of the working class of our country, if its fight and victory serve to rouse the spirit of the working class in the Capitalist countries and to strengthen its faith in its own power and in its victory, then our Party may say that its work has not been in vain. And there need be no doubt that this will be the case."

But now what had happened to the various Oppositions during this time? Naturally the victory of the plans devised by Stalin and adopted by the Party had progressively weakened those who had advocated the opposite

course. In a changing country like the U. S. S. R. an Opposition and a Government is not a matter of Ins and Outs. In a country like the U. S. S. R. the policy of the Government and Party leadership is severely tested by events, and to the degree to which it succeeds, the opposing view becomes hopelessly discredited and cannot any longer sustain the public light of day; if opposition is to be cherished, since the public is united in rejecting it on the plane of proof by practice it can be maintained only by methods of secret violence.

This is exactly what happened to the Opposition. During 1931-2, at the height of the struggle for collectivisation, with belts tight and terrible anxieties and problems besetting everyone, these sceptics who so much mistrusted the policy that Stalin had advocated, that the Party had adopted, that selfless and devoted heroes in hundreds of thousands were striving to pull through—these faint hearts and defeatists decided to adopt any means to turn back, to force the country into retreat. The whole heterogeneous collection turned to methods of murder and ruin. Here are some words of Stalin spoken in 1927 that give a fine sketch of their basic character:

"Have you ever seen fishermen when a storm is brewing on a great river—say, the Yenisei? I have seen them many a time. In the face of a storm one group of fishermen will muster all their forces, encourage their fellows and boldly put out to meet the storm: 'Cheer up, lads, hold tight to the tiller, cut the waves, we'll pull her through.' But there is another type—fishermen, who on sensing a storm, lose heart, begin to snivel, and demoralise their own ranks: 'What a misfortune, a storm is brewing; lie down, boys, in the bottom of the boat, shut your eyes, let's hope she'll make the shore somehow.'"

What had been the point of departure of the Oppositionists? Just as the Capitalist world, they had looked on the Five Year Plan as fantastic. Just as the Capitalist world, they had looked on the plan of collectivisation as doomed. The *mujik* could never be made a mechanic, they thought. "The Russian peasant," they believed—just as did scribes outside—"is invincibly attached to the private ownership of his plot of land." Like thinkers of like thoughts gravitated together. Contacts, treasonable contacts, developed with outside enemies of the Soviet power. And the more things improved within the country, the more the Stalin line, adopted by the Party, proved itself successful, the more this process was enhanced.

Where would the Opposition look for support in the country? Not from the poor peasant, for collectivisation was benefiting him. Not from the workers, for by the workers their defeatism had been many times rejected. Not from the *kulak*, the rich peasant, for though the policy of opposing or delaying collectivisation suited the rich peasant, and so at one time the Opposition had depended on him, the Capitalist remnant in the U. S. S. R., now

the *kulak* was gone. Support could come from no one at home. Therefore it had to be sought from someone abroad. This was the moment of Fascism's rise abroad, in Germany. The workers abroad had failed to forge unity in time and Hitler had come to power. *Those who lacked confidence in the working class lacked confidence in the peoples's ability to defeat Fascism.* They capitulated before it, sought to avert its wrath, to compromise with it, to surrender part in a vain dream themselves to rule the remainder in their own fashion.

But hard upon this came the triumph of collectivisation. Prosperity, abundance of food once more to the many, the proof of the correctness of Stalin's policy. What could the Opposition do?

It ceased to be an Opposition, a political current. The ground was struck from under its feet. It dared not avow openly its disagreement to the Soviet people. How could it, when events had so discredited it? Therefore it could only become a secret, criminal band. Soviet successes made it more and more impotent. Therefore, it was bound to turn to sabotage, speculate on failure. But the guidance of Stalin and his colleagues overcame all difficulties, guaranteed success. Therefore it turned inevitably to assassination. To its foreign allies, it had nothing any longer to offer, therefore in its collaboration it became no more than a despised puppet, a contemptible subordinate in espionage. Plotters, provocateurs, murderers, Fascist spies, this was the end fated by history for stubborn opponents of policies that the event had proved to be Socialist and correct. They were deserted by the actual outcome of the argument, stranded by Soviet success.

Oppositionists, so long as they had represented a current of disagreement only, had been accepted still as individuals in the community, allowed to share responsible tasks. When the murderous nature of their new activities became revealed, they were rooted out from the body politic. It was as though Stalin, true to his vow over Lenin's bier to preserve the Soviet heritage, was repeating to the dead leader his telegram from Tsaritsyn of years ago: "You may rest at ease; we are being firm. With enemies, we will behave as enemies."

History has already pronounced its judgement in this, too. Alone of all the nations attacked by Fascism, the U. S. S. R. has stood like a rock, four-square to the blow, without waverers or betrayers. How much stronger and more fortunate would humanity be to-day, how many innumerable innocent lives would have been saved, how many ancient peoples would have kept their liberty, had others been gifted in this matter with the foresight and resolution of Stalin!

For the ranks had now to be dressed to receive the coming shock. The cataclysm so long foreseen, almost to the hour, was gathering to engulf the Soviet Union and the world. For the Soviet people, advance had gone so

far since 1917, that they were on the threshold of a mode of living that was without precedent, and wherein the *whole* people would reach a standard that in other communities is the portion only of the most favoured.

Socialism had been achieved: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." Everyone in the whole community had his chance, but those who worked best who gave most, were bound to be best rewarded, while the whole community needed to do its utmost to stimulate production. From here to the system of Communism: "From each according to his needs," was a matter simply of one thing only, of increasing production, of turning scarcity into plenty. Stalin put it thus in his report for the Central Committee to the Eighteenth Party Congress in 1939. "We have outstripped the principal Capitalist countries as regards technique of production and rate of industrial development. That is very good, but it is not enough. We must outstrip them economically as well. We can do it, and we must do it. Only if we outstrip the principal Capitalist countries economically can we reckon upon our country being fully saturated with consumer's goods, on having an abundance of products, and on being able to make the transition from the first phase of Communism to its second phase."

Total production by the Soviet 180 millions, was in many fields ahead of total production by even advanced Capitalist countries, with their smaller populations. This was an index of the strength of the country. But individual wealth could be measured only on production per head. On this the U. S. S. R. was still far behind the most advanced countries, who had been industrialised for 100 years or more already. Fifteen, twenty or twenty-five years would be needed to overhaul them at the existing rate. To finish this job, at this stage, there was not to be time.

Again and again, Stalin pointed to the path that could avert the disaster—unity of the peace-loving peoples against the Fascist banditry that was rising from civilisation's decay. And when their Governments would not consent, unity of the peoples to form new Governments that *would* collaborate for peace. But here politicians in the ranks of the working-class would not consent. They preferred their own course, the result of which today can be seen by all.

"Peace is indivisible" was Stalin's call to the nations through Litvinov, Soviet representative at Geneva. And when they would not assent, but delivered up one small victim after another to win a false respite, in speech after speech Stalin warned the British and other peoples—in speeches that the leading newspapers abroad forbore to quote—what would be the consequences of this policy of non-intervention in face of aggression.

How many in the world, reading Stalin's speeches on the war in 1941, have felt as though they were drinking a draught of fresh water—long forgotten through a diet of the "eloquent" cocktails of star orators—as they

encountered for the first time the clarity, calm and forthrightness of Stalin. How much better for the British people if in their press the *Daily Worker* had not been the only paper to publish in full his warnings all through the decisive years. Receiving no effective response to the countless calls for collective security, Stalin set the course thus for the Soviet Union's leadership:

"1. To continue the policy of peace and of strengthening business relations with all countries.

"2. To be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them.

"3. To strengthen the might of the Red Army and Red Navy to the utmost.

"4. To strengthen the international bonds of friendship with the working people of all countries who are interested in peace and friendship among nations." (Speech to the Party Congress, March, 1939).

The wisdom of Stalin brought it about that, when the testing time came, alone of all nations attacked by Fascism the Soviet Union could match it in the air, could almost match it in mechanisation, could match it in military tactics, could match and surpass it in the mobilised effort, the preparedness, of its people. The care and prudence of Stalin brought it about that, when the testing time came, the security of allied help for the Soviet Union did not rest on scraps of paper, but on the inescapable facts of the situation; history itself had shattered non-intervention and isolation and forced upon the Capitalist Democracies that collective alliance they had so long voluntarily rejected.

To-day Stalin can say of the situation with truth to the Soviet people: "Our war for the freedom of our country will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for Democratic liberation." (Radio speech of July 3). To-day the British Government representative is bound to say: "Stalin must be sustained." (Beaverbrook broadcast, Oct. 23). To-day, when the sceptics are astounded and the carpers silenced by the feats of Soviet resistance, the key of the whole world's resistance, it is pertinent to recall the dauntless slogans of the man: "It is very good, but it is not enough," and "It is nothing compared to what we are going to do."

What manner of leader is Stalin, this opposite of dictators? How often has he been slandered, this "dictator" who could tell a foreign visitor: "No, one must make no individual decision. Individual decisions are always, biased.. Experience of three revolutions has shown us that out of a hundred individual decisions which have not been examined and corrected collectively, ninety are biased.. But because each one of us may correct the errors of all the others and everyone considers these corrections seriously, our decisions have hitherto been as correct as it is possible for them to be."

Who can tell his electors:

"The electors have the right to recall their deputies before their term expires, if they begin to equivocate, if they swerve from the path, if they forget their dependence on the people, on the voters. This is a remarkable law, comrades. The deputy must know that he is a servant of the people, their envoy in the Supreme Soviet, and he must conduct himself along the line of the instructions given him by the people. My advice, the advice of a candidate for deputy to his electors, is to remember this right of the electors—the right to recall the deputies before their term expires, to watch over the deputies, control them and should they take it into their heads to swerve from the right path, get rid of them, demand the calling of new elections. I would like you, comrades, to exercise systematic influence on your deputies. .. It is the duty and right of the electors to keep their deputies constantly under their control .. Such, comrades, is my advice to you, the advice of a candidate to his electors."

Who could tell the Party :

"As long as the Bolsheviks maintain connection with the broad masses of the people they will be invincible. And, on the contrary, as soon as the Bolsheviks sever themselves from the masses and lose their connection with them, as soon as they become covered with bureaucratic rust, they will lose all their strength and become a mere cypher... I think that the Bolsheviks remind us of the hero of Greek mythology, Antaeus. They, like Antaeus, are strong because they maintain connection with their mother, the masses, who gave birth to them, suckled them and reared them."

Were there ever more forthright, more precise and cant-destroying, summaries of the essence of Democracy ?

But in respects to the anti-Stalin slanders, how penetrating was the remark of a Soviet speaker (Kuorin): "He is the target of our enemies and they are right to make him so."

What qualities do the Georgian companions of his youth and school-days best remember ? "Frank cordiality." "Kindness." "Delicacy." "Gaiety." How does a later visitor (Barbusse) list them ? "Formidable intelligence," "breadth of knowledge," "amazing orderliness of mind," "passion for precision," "inexhaustible spirit of progress," "rapidity, sureness and intensity of decision," "constant care to choose the right men."

Least this seem panegyric, let us quote a recent witness, one by no means drawn to the subject of his description before he met and knew him : "Is he an easy man to satisfy ? Not so. He is an exacting man, even though he does not look it. He is short of stature. Well dressed, very well dressed. There is nothing slovenly about him. He is always ready to laugh, quick to see a joke and willing to make one. His eyes are alert. His face quickly reflects his emotions. Gloom and joy are marked therein. His countenance lights up with pleasure when the word of assent is given. He is a judge of values, and his knowledge of armaments is vast and wide..." Beaverbrook's verdict is not dissimilar from those already quoted.

Barbusse has described Stalin's mode of life. The simplicity, that has nothing in common with the ostentatious "democracy" of dukes and princes. The pipe, the ironical twinkle, the invariable dress of top boots, loose khaki trousers and tunic varied only in summer by a white linen suit of similar cut.

Stalin goes to bed at 4 a. m., has one personal secretary, letters are not signed for him, he is supplied with the material and does everything else himself, yet everything is replied to. Barbusse says that in a visit to his rooms at the Kremlin one never meets on the way more than three or four people. The rooms consist of a tiny hall, three bedrooms and a dining-room. He has three children—one, the eldest boy, a Red Army junior commander. His wife, the daughter of a Transcaucasian comrade named Alleluiev, died in 1934.

On what does his fame repose? Said Stalin: The times have passed when great men were the chief makers of history." But, comments Barbusse: "The great man is the man who, foreseeing the course that things are taking, gets ahead of them instead of following them, and acts for or against them in advance. The hero does not create an unexplored country, but he discovers it... Lenin and Stalin did not invent history, but they discovered it. They brought the future nearer."

In that is the source of the boundless esteem and affection Stalin enjoys in the Soviet Union. Soviet confidence in the Great Stalin rest not on "faith" but on works. Stalin is no orator-hero, no spell-binder. No one who knows the Soviet Union as it is—and who knew Russia as it was—would even think to ask the question: Why is Stalin loved? After all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The precious value of Stalin is proven to every Soviet citizen by every fact of his experience.

Hence, in the time of emergency, Stalin took the helm. Until 1940 Stalin was not, technically, a cabinet minister. He was Party General Secretary, elected a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet (the Soviet Parliament) in 1937, and by the Supreme Soviet elected to its Presidium—the constitutionally controlling body between sessions. In 1941, when the storm was clearly about to break Stalin was appointed by the Presidium to the post Lenin had held before him, that corresponding to the Premier in Britain, Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars. With the bursting of the storm, the man of Tashteyn ("Calm and literally never sleeping. He had one idea only: they must win. This indomitable will of Stalin's transmitted itself...no one for a moment had any doubts about victory") became Peoples' Commissar for Defence, Chairman of the State Committee for Defence. The Soviet people, as Lenin before them, summoned once again "the only man," sent him as once before, to every front, to that point at which humanity is in greatest peril.

Who is there who does not know that humanity's fate is being decided in to-day's battle? Who does not recognise that the Soviet front is the decisive front? Who is not fortified in his own effort by the knowledge that Stalin's courage, Stalin's sagacity, Stalin's inflexible will are applied at the decisive point? As Barbusse wrote: "Whoever you may be, the finest part of your destiny is in the hands of that other man, who also watches over you, and who works for you—the man with the scholar's mind, the workman's face, and the dress of a private soldier."

DATES

- 1879 - b. in Gori, Georgia
 - 1888-94 - Gori ecclesiastical school.
 - 1894-99 - Tiflis theological seminary, expelled.
 - 1898-1901 Working class activity with the Tiflis Social Democrats.
 - 1901-2 - Organisation in Batumi, first arrest.
 - 1902-17 - Six arrests, five escapes, last exile near Arctic circle.
 - 1904-10 - Revolutionary work in Baku and Tiflis.
 - 1905 - Met Lenin in Tammerfors.
 - 1906 - Stockholm Congress.
 - 1907 - London Congress.
 - 1912 - Elected member Central Committee and of Russian Bureau; conferred with Lenin in Cracow.
 - 1913 - Published "Marxism and the National and Colonial Question."
 - 1911-13 - Founded *Pravda*, guided Party press, electoral activity and work of Bolshevik deputies in Duma at St. Petersburg.
 - 1913-17 - Sixth arrest, exile near the Arctic.
 - 1917 - Edited *Pravda*, prepared and guided, with Lenin, October Revolution.
 - 1917 - Commissar for Nationalities.
 - 1918-20 - Civil War, First Order of the Red Banner.
 - 1919 - Commissar for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.
 - 1920-23 - Member of the War Council.
 - 1922 - Appointed General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party.
 - 1924 - Death of Lenin; Lectures, "Foundations of Leninism."
 - 1925 - Launching of Industrialisation.
 - 1927 - Launching of Collectivisation.
 - 1929 - First Five Year Plan.
 - 1930 - Second Order of the Red Banner, for services in the construction of Socialism.
 - 1931 - Campaign for technique.
 - 1933 - Five Year Plan fulfilled in 4 years; campaign for prosperity of collective farms.
 - 1935 - Stakhanov movement; Constitution.
 - 1939 - Third Five Year Plan.
 - 1941 - Chairman of Council of Peoples' Commissars (Premier).
 - 1941 - Peoples' Commissar for Defence and Chairman of the State Committee for Defence.
- Elected Deputy to the Supreme Soviet for the Stalin Electoral District of Moscow, November, 1937.